

October 30, 2009

All Hallows' Eve, or Halloween as it is known today, was originally celebrated as an ancient Celtic festival 2,000 years ago in present-day Ireland. The Celtic festival celebrated the end of the harvest season and the beginning of a new year on Nov. 1. Celebrations that lasted into the evening of Oct. 31, included dressing up in costume with animal heads and skins while dancing around large bonfires. During the festivities, the Celts sacrificed animals and crops to appease the local deities and to scare away underworld ghosts and ghouls.

Halloween today, as many of you are aware, is nothing like the celebrations of years past. Today's autumnal holiday consists of children innocently trick-or-treating and, most recently, adults dressing up in creepy costumes while consuming dangerous amounts of alcohol at various Halloween parties.

Everyone should enjoy the opportunity to don a costume, enjoy a cold libation and dance into the night to ward off ghostly spirits, but when alcohol starts to monopolize the holiday and impact those who are not so passionate about the dead then the merriment is out of control.

The scary truth to this holiday is that adults (driver or motorcycle rider) in 2008 were involved in 58 percent of highway fatalities across the nation with a BAC of .08 or higher on Halloween night (6 p.m. Oct. 31 to 5:59 a.m. Nov. 1). These deaths could have been avoided.

The Delaware Office of Highway Safety, in conjunction with local police departments, is planning several checkpoints to frighten most, if not all, adults into planning a safe and memorable Halloween. So, do us all a favor by not putting your fellow motorists at risk by phoning a cab, being a designated driver or just staying the night at your local party.

Enjoy a much-revered fall tradition!

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As submitted to The Coastal Point.